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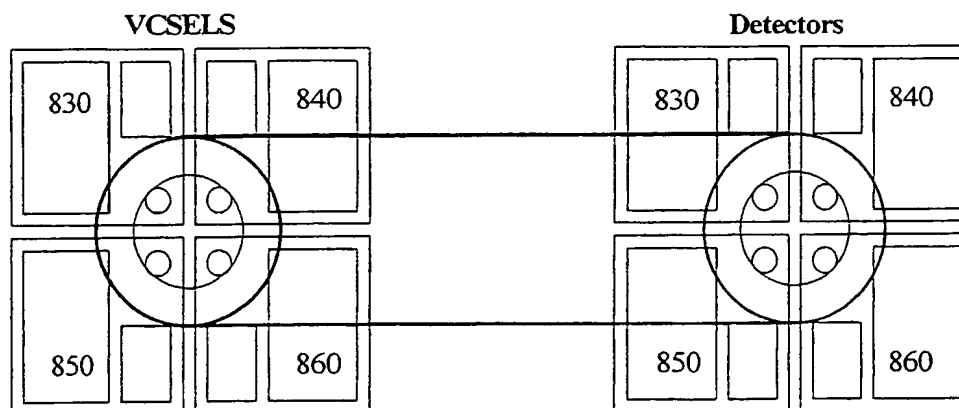
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(54) Title: OPTICAL FIBER UTILIZATION FOR VCSEL DRIVEN COMMUNICATIONS



(57) Abstract: An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization. VCSEL and detector elements (850, 870, 830, 840, 860) are configured on an optical matrix array with allocated surface area footprints at standard industry pitch dimensions, the elements of alternate rows and columns being offset from centerline of their footprints in opposite directions so as to create a pattern of sets of two or four adjacent optical elements operating at a common or different wavelengths. A connector provides offset alignment of the fiber bundle to the matrix array (850, 870, 830, 840, 860) so as to align a single fiber of standard industry diameter equal to the pitch of the array, with the center of each multi-element set so the fiber core diameter spans all elements of the set. The required modification to standard commercial mask design and chip fabrication is within the scope of present fiberoptic technology.

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OPTICAL FIBER UTILIZATION FOR VCSEL DRIVEN COMMUNICATIONS

This application claims priority for all purposes to pending application US60/238,817 filed 10/6/2000, by the same inventor.

Field of Invention

This invention relates to short reach optical interconnects consisting of optical emitters in the form of VCSEL (Vertical Cavity Surface Emitting Laser) arrays and photo detector array for transmitting data through optical fibers, and in particular to techniques for enabling multiple optical emitters to transmit over a single fiber.

Background

Data communications rely heavily on fiber optic transmission to achieve the required speed and bandwidth. Electro optical transducer arrays for converting electrical data signals into optical emissions are coupled with careful alignment to fiber bundles for transmitting the light signals over both short and long distances to photo detector arrays which convert the light back into electrical signals for further processing.

The current implementations of these fiber optic interconnects commonly couple a matrix array of N VCSELs configured in a row/column pattern at an industry standard pitch, emitting light signals at an industry standard frequency, to an equal number of single or multi mode optical fibers of industry standard diameter. A single VCSEL is allocated a specific surface area footprint nominally equal to the row/column pitch, and transmits its light pulses from its vertical cavity, which is uniformly disposed in a common position within the footprint. The light is directed into a first end of a single optical fiber and hence to a single detector of the same frequency at the other end of the fiber. This makes up a channel or optical link.

Conventionally, differential signal transmission implemented in the supporting circuitry switches the signal between two active transmitter/detector sets, so as to make signal detection easier and more reliable at the receiving end. The current practice requires two channels or VCSEL/fiber/detector links; where the high/low or 1 and 0 signal
5 switching is alternated between the links for respective high and low signal elements. The received signals of the two links are recombined by supporting circuitry at the receiving end for processing.

Current industry practice is based on commercially available 850 nanometer
10 VCSELs from a number of vendors, commercially available multi mode optical fiber and detectors that use quantum well structures with the same wave length characteristics as the VCSEL transmitters.

The technology for transmission of data by photonic means started with a single
15 laser transmitted into a single fiber with a detector at the other end. These links were first developed for use by the phone companies and then later used for implementation of data transmission over the world wide web. The edge emitting 1300 nanometer lasers that are used to accomplish these links have grown from single frequency devices to multiple frequency devices that are used to accomplish wave division multiplexed WDM
20 transmissions. The use of WDM provides the capability to transmit numerous data streams through a single multi mode fiber thereby reducing the number of fibers required to transmit massive amounts of data from different sources.

The implementation for short haul fiber optic data transmission which uses 850
25 nanometer VCSELs and detectors started with optical ether net which uses a single fiber per transmitter/detector pair per link. This has been expanded to implementations that use one-dimensional and two-dimensional arrays of these links to satisfy the industry bandwidth requirements. These implementations, however, still use a fiber per link. VCSELs and detectors that operate at 850 nanometers are used in these arrays in products
30 currently on the market under the trade names of Parolli and TC48. (No claim is made to

these marks.) The fiber and connectors used in these links are a significant cost driver for the products.

The current short haul fiber optic data interconnects are limited by two factors. The first factor is the speed limitations of the ASIC drivers and demodulators, which interface the electronic inputs and outputs to the photonic devices, which delineates the throughput bandwidth available. The second factor is, that to effectively meet the bit error rate requirements of the commercial industry desired 10^{-18} or more realistic 10^{-15} , differential logic architectures have been implemented which currently require two fibers per interconnect. Both of these factors impact cost and bandwidth considerations. The instant invention is directed to these issues.

Summary of the Invention

It is an object of the invention to provide for a reduction in the fiber count of equivalent commercial configurations by at least 2:1 with the potential for reductions in fiber utilization of 4:1, with the inherent attendant reduction in cost or the possibility of built in redundancy without significant added cost.

The invention, simply described, makes use of VCSEL arrays and detector arrays of commercially available pitch and operating characteristics that are compatible with commercially available optical fiber sizes. The array design is modified and fabricated as multi-frequency arrays with selected VCSELs and detectors arranged in a selected pattern operating at a selected frequency, and other VCSELs and detectors arranged in a related pattern and operating at another selected frequency. The modification to the standard commercial design, and fabrication of the modified array, is within the scope of the present fiber optic chip technology, and need only be attended with close attention and practice to achieve the required results.

The VCSEL arrays and corresponding detector arrays are arranged by the mask design and fabrication to provide groupings of VCSELs of different frequencies and

corresponding detectors of the same frequency set, but still at the same average pitch as the original commercial design. Each transmitting group is then coupled to its respective receiving group by a single, multi-mode fiber of the same core diameter as contemplated by the original commercial array design, so that multiple frequencies, such as two

5 frequencies for a differential signal transmission channel, can be transmitted through a single fiber. This technique requires only half as many, or fewer, fibers between the transmitting array and the receiving array, as compared to the equivalent commercial norm.

Brief Description of the Figures

Fig. 1 is a partial top view of a VCSEL array of the prior art, with a single VCSEL per fiber pattern.

5

Fig. 2 is a top view diagram of a VCSEL array of a first preferred embodiment with a two VCSEL per fiber pattern.

10

Fig. 3 is a single fiber, dual mode optical link diagram showing a VCSEL and detector co-resident on respective arrays, connected by a single fiber.

Fig. 4 is a four VCSEL pattern array connected by a single fiber to a corresponding four detector array.

Description of Preferred Embodiment

As discussed in the background section, in the 850 nanometer optical link arrays that are in use today the separation between the active lasers is 125 microns, as illustrated by prior art Fig. 1. They are implemented this way for a couple of reasons. First, for cost considerations this is the industry standard configuration that is manufactured by the VCSEL vendors. Second, the industry standard and most commonly used optical fiber outside diameter for a single mode fiber with a 62.5 core, is 125 microns. This allows for reasonably easy alignment of the fibers to the VCSEL and detector arrays with a suitable connector. The alignment is done by controlling the fiber alignment installation into the fiber bundle connectors and by matching of corner fibers by light beam detection between transmitting and receiving arrays through the connectors and fiber bundle.

The larger circles in prior art Fig. 1 represent the outside diameter of the fiber optic cables and the small circle in the center of the large circle is the active laser element of the VCSEL. The pitch or distance between the laser centers is a 125 micron by 125 micron footprint, corresponding to a square pattern at the fiber diameter dimension. Arrays of these VCSELs have been made from 16x16 up to 128x128. These arrays have been hybridized onto CMOS ASICs and fanouts to drive the lasers. Detector arrays of the same proportions are likewise readily available.

The most basic embodiment of the invention that meets the objective of using less fiber overall, is to simply rearrange the mask set to align alternate columns (or rows) of lasers to the adjacent corners of their respective existing footprints, so that with a slight offset in the original connector alignment, two lasers can fire into the same 62.5 micron core.

This two-VCSEL/fiber arrangement provides the option to configure for redundancy in case of VCSEL failure. It can be implemented in a mode where both are concurrently operated with the same signal at the same time, providing unmonitored, full time, redundancy. The redundant use of VCSELs makes this approach more costly and

therefore it would only be used in cases where an outage that could not wait for another circuit to pick up the load would cause grave consequences. A more likely configuration, a preferred embodiment mode in order to reduce heat and power consumption in the array, is that the supporting circuitry be configured with VCSEL monitoring, whether by direct
5 sensing or by feedback from the detector end of the link, to provide that only one VCSEL is active unless or until it fails, upon which condition the other VCSEL would then be activated. Either way, the link can be terminated with one detector as is done by convention, or with two detectors, using the methodology described.

10 The 850 nanometer VCSELs are currently fabricated to a tolerance of +/- 2 nanometers. As will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, changing the wavelength of the light produced by alternate rows or columns of VCSELs by +/-10 to 20 nanometers requires either compression or expansion of the quantum well structure in the growth plane and some minor adjustments to the mirrors. For example, there may be grown two
15 epitaxial structures such that a first pattern wafer of VCSELs is produced at 850 and a second pattern wafer is produced at 870 nanometers. A nominal 20 nanometer frequency differential remains within the general capability of the VCSEL fabricators, and yet provides adequate frequency separation for good signal detection at the receiving end.

20 Then fabricating the devices using mask sets that place the lasers as adjacent corner pairs within their respective footprints, provides a modified commercial design of standard dimensions and normal operating characteristics, and therefore cost effective, which allows light at two different wavelengths to travel down the same fiber core, as illustrated in Fig. 2.

25 A further preferred embodiment for using less fiber based on commercially available array designs, is to use interdigitated hybridization of VCSELs and detectors at each end of the link, where corresponding detector/emitter sets are both looking into the same fiber at each end. Suitable supporting circuitry in the array substrate can be
30 implemented by current technology to support this configuration. Interdigitated hybridization of VCSELs and detectors in a 16x16 array has been accomplished at 125

micron pitch. This topology provides for two way communication in a single fiber of standard dimensions. In the case illustrated in Fig. 3, a realignment of the standard pitch optical fiber connector would allow corresponding 125 pitch devices to look into the same fiber core. Since the photons are traveling in opposite directions and the light would not be in phase on a continuing basis this approach provides a simple means to fiber count reduction.

The ability to even further reduce fiber count while using arrays with standard size pixel footprints may be realized by using a set of four VCSELs at discrete wavelengths coupled into the same fiber, by doing quadruple hybridization of devices with adjacent laser apertures. The detection is accomplished with quantum well structure detectors that are tuned and calibrated for the four different wavelengths of received light. Fig. 4 depicts this embodiment of the invention, emitters 830, 840, 850 and 860 and corresponding detectors having those respective wavelengths in nanometers. In this case, a micro lens may be useful at both ends of the fiber to consolidate the light at the emitter end and distribute it at the detector end.

Similar to the two-VCSEL embodiment of Fig. 3, the four VCSELs may be operated in various advantageous modes depending on bandwidth and redundancy requirements, all as implemented in the supporting circuitry.

As will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art, the invention is susceptible of many other embodiments, all within the scope of the claims that follow. For example, there is an optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization consisting of a matrix array of N VCSELs having an average pitch by row and column of P microns, where each VCSEL has an allocated surface area footprint of about P by P microns and an effective emitter diameter of E microns, E being less than P .

There is included a corresponding matrix array of detectors of similar pitch, and an optical fiber bundle of fibers of an outer diameter of P microns and a core diameter of C microns, C being at least two times E , the effective emitter diameter of the VCSELs. One

end of the optical fiber bundle is connected by a connector to the matrix array of VCSELs. The other end is connected to the matrix array of detectors, preferably with a similar connector.

5 The matrix array of VCSELs is divided into rows of footprints, each row being grouped into first and second sets of alternate rows. Each row has a centerline running lengthwise through the row through each footprint. Particularly, each VCSEL of the first set of alternate rows is configured at a predetermined uniform position off the centerline within its own allocated footprint. Each VCSEL of the second set is configured at a mirror
10 image position with respect to the first set, off its respective centerline within its respective footprint. This results in a pattern of $N/2$ pairs of adjacent VCSELs such as illustrated in Fig. 2, all having the same *average* pitch, but biased in position to create a uniform pattern of pairs of VCSELs. The connector is aligned with the matrix array such that each pair of VCSELs is aligned with a single fiber core. The other end may be connected to one or
15 more detectors.

The array may be 16 by 16 VCSELs or more in size, even up to 128 by 128 or larger. The VCSELs may be configured to operate at about the same wavelength of light, preferably in the range of 850 nanometers. Both VCSELs of each pair may be configured
20 within the supporting circuitry for transmitting the same data stream for redundancy purposes, whether both are on at the same time all the time, or one is turned on if the other is detected to have failed.

Alternatively, the first set of VCSELs may be configured for operating at a first
25 wavelength, while the second set is configured to operate at a second wavelength, preferably both wavelengths being within the range of 800 to 900 nanometers. In this mode, the pair of VCSELs may be configured for differential signal transmission within the single fiber core. The other end of the fiber may be a single, dual wavelength detector, or two detectors. The pitch P may be equal to about 125 micrometers, the fiber outer
30 diameter may be about the same as the array pitch, and the fiber core C may be equal to about 62.5 micrometers, as is commonly used in the industry today.

As another example, there is an optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization that has an optical fiber bundle terminated by connectors at each end with respective interdigitated matrix arrays of $N/2$ VCSELs and $N/2$ photo detectors. The VCSELs and photo detectors may be configured by design and fabrication as patterns or subpatterns of alternate rows or alternate rows and alternate columns of VCSELs and photo detectors. Both VCSELs and photo detectors are referred to for this explanation as elements. Each element has a standard allocated surface area footprint of about P by P microns. The array patterns have an average pitch by row and column of P microns. The VCSELs have an effective emitter diameter of about E microns, and the photo detectors have an effective sensor diameter of about F microns, E and F each being less than pitch P . There is included a optical fiber bundle consisting of fibers of outer diameter P microns and core diameter C microns, C being at least equal to E plus F .

Of note, each matrix array is divided into rows of footprints, the rows being grouped into first and second row sets of alternate rows. Each row has a row centerline running through each footprint in the row. Each element of the first row set is configured at a predetermined uniform position off the row centerline within its respective footprint. Each element of the second row set is configured at a mirror image position with respect to the first row set off its respective row centerline in its respective footprint. This results in a pattern of $N/2$ element pairs, where each pair consists of one VCSEL and one photo detector. The connectors are aligned with their respective matrix arrays such that corresponding element pairs of each array are aligned with a respective single fiber core.

The VCSELs and photo detectors are be configured to operate at the same wavelength of light, preferably 850 nanometers, with the footprint pitch being about 125 micrometers and the fiber core being about 62.5 micrometers. The Fig. 3 illustration is representative in part, of this example.

As yet another example, an extension of the previous example, there is an optical data transmission link as above, with an optical fiber bundle terminated by connectors at each end with respective interdigitated matrix arrays of $N/2$ VCSELs and $N/2$ photo

detectors, where the VCSELs and photo detectors are all referred to as elements, and the elements alternate between VCSEL and detector by row, column, or both. Notably, each matrix array is divided into rows of footprints, the rows being grouped into first and second row sets of alternate rows. As above, each row has a row centerline running
5 through each footprint in the row. Each element of the first row set is configured at a predetermined uniform position off the row centerline within its respective footprint, and each element of the second row set is configured at a mirror image position with respect to the first row set off its respective row centerline in its respective footprint.

10 Distinguished from the above example, each matrix array is likewise divided into columns of footprints. The columns are grouped into first and second column sets of alternate columns. Each column has a column centerline running through each footprint in the column. Each element of the first column set is configured at a predetermined uniform position off the column centerline within its respective footprint, and each element of the
15 second column set is configured at a mirror image position with respect to the first column set off its respective column centerline in its respective footprint. This orthogonal mirror imaging of element offsets within their respective footprints, in both rows and columns, results in a pattern of $N/4$, four-element sets, each four-element set including two VCSELs and two photo detectors.

20 As in prior examples, the connectors are aligned with their respective matrix arrays so that corresponding four-element sets in each array are aligned with a respective single fiber core, with two VCSEL/detector sets operating in each direction.

25 The two VCSELs in each four-element set may be configured for operating on different wavelengths, such as by having the VCSELs common to the first row or column set configured for operating at a first wavelength, and the VCSELs common to the second row or column set configured for operating at a second wavelength. This permits the link to be operated as a redundant, bi-directional link; a two channel bi-directional link; or a bi-
30 directional, differential transmission link, all within a single fiber, as may be configured within the supporting circuitry and host control system.

As yet another example, there is an optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization consisting of a matrix array of N VCSELs with an average pitch by row and column of P microns, where each VCSEL has an allocated surface area footprint of about P by P microns and an effective emitter diameter of E microns, E being less than P , as has been previously described. There is a matrix array of detectors and an optical fiber bundle of fibers of outer diameter P microns and core diameter C microns, C being at least two times E . A first end of the optical fiber bundle is connected by a connector to the matrix array of VCSELs, and the other end of the optical fiber bundle is connected to the matrix array of detectors.

The matrix array of VCSELs is divided into rows of footprints, the rows being grouped into first and second row sets of alternate rows. Each row has a row centerline running through each footprint in the row. In particular, each VCSEL of the first row set is configured at a predetermined uniform position off the row centerline within its respective footprint, and each VCSEL of the second row set is configured at a mirror image position with respect to the first row set, off its respective row centerline in its respective footprint.

The matrix array of VCSELs is likewise divided into columns of footprints. The columns are then grouped into first and second column sets of alternate columns. Each column has a column centerline running through each footprint in the column. More particularly, each VCSEL of the first column set is configured at a predetermined uniform position off the column centerline within its respective footprint. Each VCSEL of the second column set is configured at a mirror image position with respect to the first column set off its respective column centerline in its respective footprint. The combination of the mirror image alternate row sets and the mirror image alternate column sets results in a pattern of $N/4$ quad sets of four adjacent VCSELs, in an array retaining the same average pitch, as illustrated in Fig. 4.

The connector is aligned with the matrix array such that each quad set of VCSELs is aligned with a first terminal end of a single fiber core. The VCSELs common to the first row set may be configured for operating at a first wavelength, while the VCSELs common

to the second row set are configured for operating at a second wavelength. This allows, within each quad set, for redundant operation as between the two VCSELS common to the first row set, and as between the two VCSELS common to the second row set, as would be configured within the supporting circuitry of the chip.

5

Then further, the first row VCSELS and the second row VCSELS can be configured within the supporting circuitry for differential signal transmission, within the single fiber core. The two wavelengths are preferably 20 nanometers apart, within the range of 800 to 900 nanometers. As in other examples, the pitch P is preferably 125
10 micrometers, C equal to about 62.5 micrometers. This provides both redundancy and differential signal transmission within the same link, all at wavelengths, and with pitch dimensions and fiber sizes commonly used in industry today.

The quad set example can be configured within the above parameters for
15 transmission at four wavelengths, each VCSEL at a discrete wavelength, by the following design and fabrication scheme. The VCSELS common to the first row set and the first column set are configured for operating at a first wavelength. The VCSELS common to the first row set and the second column set are configured for operating at a second
20 wavelength. The VCSELS common to the second row set and the first column set are configured for operating at a third wavelength. And the VCSELS common to the second row set and the second column set are configured for operating at a fourth wavelength. The wavelengths are again preferably 20 nanometers apart within the range of 800 to 900 nanometers. Similar or suitable detector configurations at the other end of the fiber permit four channels or streams of data, or two differential data streams.

25

Still other examples within the scope of the claims will be apparent to those skilled in the art.

CLAIMS

I claim:

- 5 1. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization comprising
a matrix array of N VCSELs having an average pitch by row and column of P
microns, each said VCSEL having an allocated surface area footprint of about P by P
microns and an effective emitter diameter of E microns, E being less than P,
a matrix array of detectors,
10 an optical fiber bundle of fibers of outer diameter P microns and core diameter C
microns, C being at least two times E, a first end of said optical fiber bundle being
connected by a connector to said matrix array of VCSELs, a second end of said optical
fiber bundle being connected to said matrix array of detectors,
said matrix array of VCSELs being divided into rows of said footprints, said rows
15 being grouped into first and second sets of alternate rows, each said row having a
centerline running through each footprint in said row, each said VCSEL of said first set,
configured at a predetermined uniform position off said centerline within its respective said
footprint, each said VCSEL of said second set configured at a mirror image position with
respect to said first set off its respective said centerline in its respective said footprint,
20 thereby resulting in a pattern of N/2 pairs of adjacent said VCSELs,
said connector being aligned with said matrix array such that each said pair of said
VCSELs is aligned with a single fiber core.
2. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 1,
25 said array comprising at least 16 by 16 VCSELs.
3. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 1,
said array comprising 128 by 128 VCSELs.
- 30 4. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 1,
all said VCSELs configured to operate at about the same wavelength of light.

5. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 4, said wavelength being 850 nanometers.
6. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 5, both VCSELs of each said pair of said VCSELs configured for transmitting a common side of a common data stream.
7. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 1, said first set of said VCSELs operating at a first wavelength, said second set of VCSELs configured to operate at a second said wavelength.
8. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 7, said wavelengths being within the range of 800 to 900 nanometers.
9. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 8, a said pair of said VCSELs configured for differential signal transmission within said single fiber core.
10. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 1, P equal to about 125 micrometers, C equal to about 62.5 micrometers.
11. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization comprising
an optical fiber bundle terminated by connectors at each end with respective interdigitated matrix arrays of $N/2$ VCSELs and $N/2$ photo detectors, said VCSELs and said photo detectors all referred to as elements, each said element having a standard allocated surface area footprint of about P by P microns, said arrays having an average pitch by row and column of P microns, said VCSELs having an effective emitter diameter of about E microns, said photo detectors having an effective sensor diameter of about F microns, E and F each being less than P,
said optical fiber bundle comprising fibers of outer diameter P microns and core diameter C microns, C being at least equal to E plus F,

each said matrix array being divided into rows of said footprints, said rows being grouped into first and second row sets of alternate rows, each said row having a row centerline running through each footprint in said row, each said element of said first row set configured at a predetermined uniform position off said row centerline within its
5 respective said footprint, each said element of said second row set configured at a mirror image position with respect to said first row set off its respective said row centerline in its respective said footprint, thereby resulting in a pattern of $N/2$ element pairs, each said pair comprising one said VCSEL and one said photo detector,

said connectors being aligned with respective said matrix arrays such that
10 corresponding said element pairs of each array are aligned with a respective single fiber core.

12. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 11, said array comprising at least 16 by 16 interdigitated said VCSELs and photo detectors.

15 13. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 11, said array comprising 128 by 128 interdigitated said VCSELs and photo detectors.

14. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 11,
20 all said VCSELs and photo detectors configured to operate at about the same wavelength of light.

15. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 14, said wavelength being 850 nanometers.

25 16. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 11, P equal to about 125 micrometers, C equal to about 62.5 micrometers.

17. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization comprising
30 an optical fiber bundle terminated by connectors at each end with respective interdigitated matrix arrays of $N/2$ VCSELs and $N/2$ photo detectors, said VCSELs and

said photo detectors all referred to as elements, each said element having a standard allocated surface area footprint of about P by P microns, said arrays having an average pitch by row and column of P microns, said VCSELs having an effective emitter diameter of about E microns, said photo detectors having an effective sensor diameter of about F microns, E and F each being less than P,

said optical fiber bundle comprising fibers of outer diameter P microns and core diameter C microns, C being at least equal to E plus F,

each said matrix array being divided into rows of said footprints, said rows being grouped into first and second row sets of alternate rows, each said row having a row centerline running through each footprint in said row, each said element of said first row set configured at a predetermined uniform position off said row centerline within its respective said footprint, each said element of said second row set configured at a mirror image position with respect to said first row set off its respective said row centerline in its respective said footprint,

each said matrix array being likewise divided into columns of said footprints, said columns being grouped into first and second column sets of alternate columns, each said column having a column centerline running through each footprint in said column, each said element of said first column set configured at a predetermined uniform position off said column centerline within its respective said footprint, each said element of said second column set configured at a mirror image position with respect to said first column set off its respective said column centerline in its respective said footprint,

thereby resulting in a pattern of N/4 four element sets, each four element set including two said VCSELs and two said photo detectors.

said connectors being aligned with respective said matrix arrays such that corresponding said four element sets of each array are aligned with a respective single fiber core.

18. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 17, said VCSELs common to said first row set configured for operating at a first wavelength, said VCSELs common to said second row set configured for operating at a second said

wavelength, each four element set having a first row set VSCEL and a second row set VCSEL.

19. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 18,
5 said wavelengths being within the range of 800 to 900 nanometers.

20. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 19,
pitch P equal to about 125 micrometers, core diameter C equal to about 62.5 micrometers.

10 21. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization comprising
a matrix array of N VCSELs having an average pitch by row and column of P
microns, each said VCSEL having an allocated surface area footprint of about P by P
microns and an effective emitter diameter of E microns, E being less than P,
a matrix array of detectors,
15 an optical fiber bundle of fibers of outer diameter P microns and core diameter C
microns, C being at least two times E, a first end of said optical fiber bundle being
connected by a connector to said matrix array of VCSELs, a second end of said optical
fiber bundle being connected to said matrix array of detectors,
said matrix array of VCSELs being divided into rows of said footprints, said rows
20 being grouped into first and second row sets of alternate rows, each said row having a row
centerline running through each footprint in said row, each said VCSEL of said first row
set configured at a predetermined uniform position off said row centerline within its
respective said footprint, each said VCSEL of said second row set configured at a mirror
image position with respect to said first row set off its respective said row centerline in its
25 respective said footprint,
said matrix array of VCSELs being likewise divided into columns of said
footprints, said columns being grouped into first and second column sets of alternate
columns, each said column having a column centerline running through each footprint in
said column, each said VCSEL of said first column set configured at a predetermined
30 uniform position off said column centerline within its respective said footprint, each said
VCSEL of said second column set configured at a mirror image position with respect to

said first column set off its respective said column centerline in its respective said footprint,

thereby resulting in a pattern of $N/4$ quad sets of four adjacent said VCSELS, said connector being aligned with said matrix array such that each said quad set is aligned with a first terminal end of a single fiber core.

22. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 21, said array comprising at least 16 by 16 VCSELS.

23. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 21, said array comprising 128 by 128 VCSELS.

24. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 21, said VCSELS common to said first row set configured for operating at a first wavelength, said VCSELS common to said second row set configured for operating at a second said wavelength.

25. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 24, where within each said quad set, said VCSELS common to said first row set are configured within supporting circuitry for redundant operation, said VCSELS common to said second row are configured within said supporting circuitry for redundant operation, and said first row VCSELS and said second row VCSELS are configured within said supporting circuitry for differential signal transmission within said single fiber core.

26. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 25, said wavelengths being within the range of 800 to 900 nanometers.

27. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 26, P equal to about 125 micrometers, C equal to about 62.5 micrometers.

28. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 21, said VCSELs common to said first row set and said first column set configured for operating at a first wavelength, said VCSELs common to said first row set and said second column set configured for operating at a second said wavelength, said VCSELs common to
5 said second row set and said first column set configured for operating at a third said wavelength, said VCSELs common to said second row set and said second column set configured for operating at a fourth said wavelength.
29. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 28,
10 said wavelengths being within the range of 800 to 900 nanometers.
30. An optical data transmission link with improved fiber utilization according to claim 29, P equal to about 125 micrometers, C equal to about 62.5 micrometers.

1/2

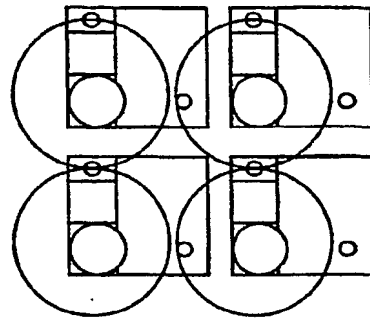


FIG. 1
(PRIOR ART)

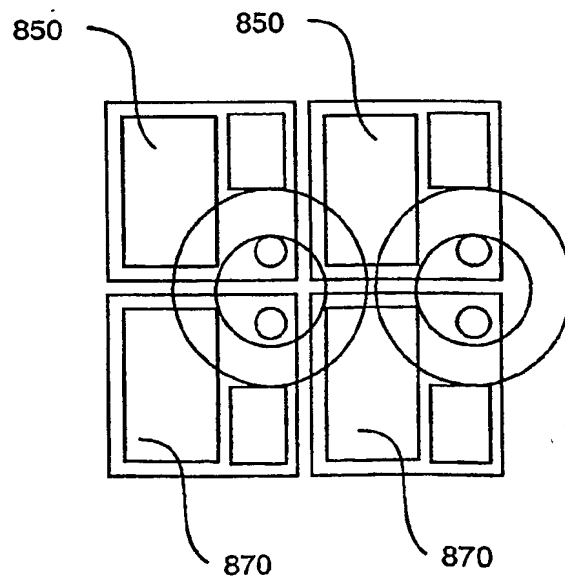


FIG. 2

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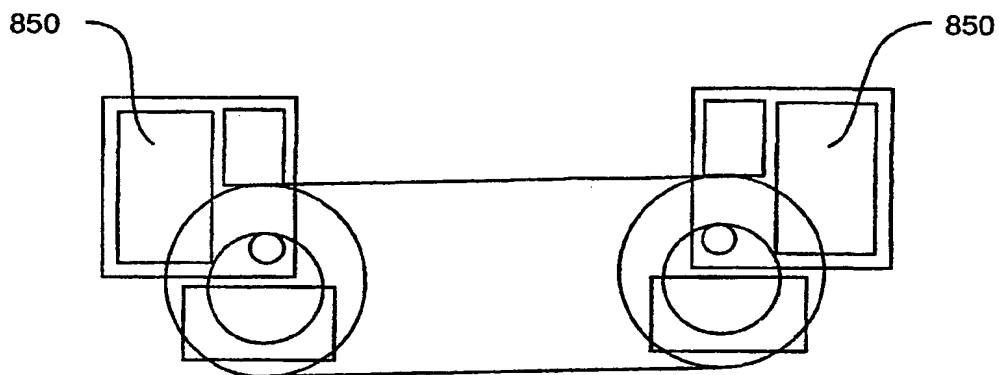


FIG. 3

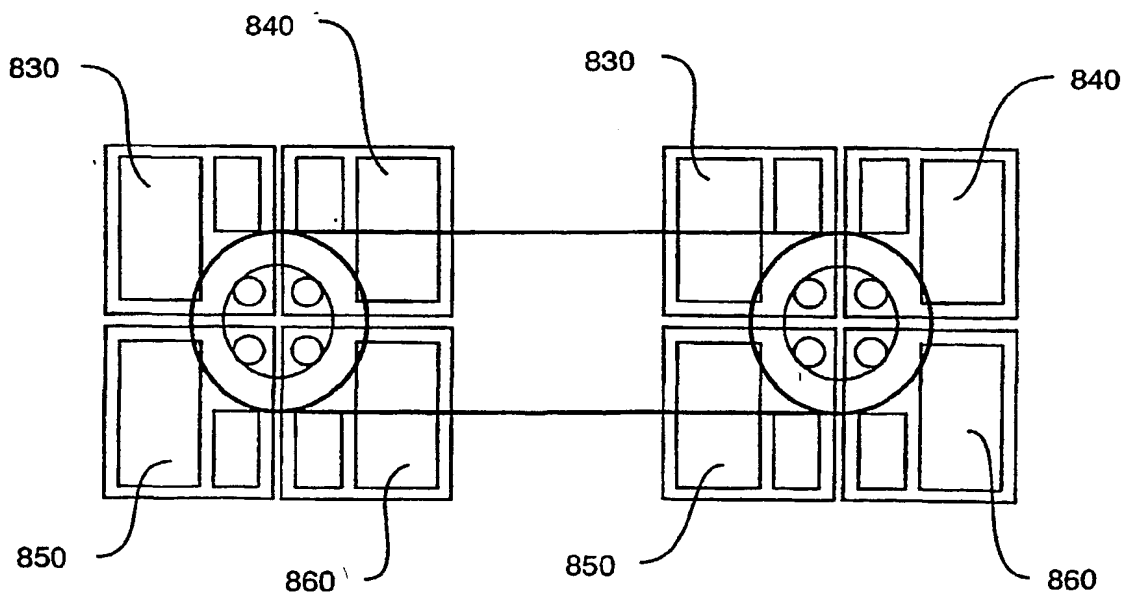


FIG. 4

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US01/42567

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(7) :G02B 6/04

US CL :385/115, 116, 24, 88, 89; 359/124

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 385/115, 116, 24, 88, 89; 359/124

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched
NONE

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

USPTO APS EAST

search terms: (VCSEL adj array\$) and (fiber\$ adj bundle\$)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 5,650,612 A (CRISWELL et al) 22 July 1997 (22.07.1997), see entire document.	1-30
A	US 6,116,791 A (LANINGA et al) 12 September 2000 (12.09.2000), see entire document.	1-30
A	US 6,088,376 A (O'BRIEN et al) 11 July 2000 (11.07.2000), see entire document.	1-30
A	US 5,557,693 A (STEVENS et al) 17 September 1996 (17.09.1996), see entire document.	1-30
A	US 5,857,042 A (ROBERTSON et al) 05 January 1999 (05.01.1999), see entire document.	1-30

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

☐ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
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"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"&" document member of the same patent family
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

Date of the actual completion of the international search

04 DECEMBER 2001

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